Thomas. A. Clark

THE

IMPRISONED

MISSIONARIES.

THE IMPRISONED MISSIONARIES.

The mere annunciation of the fact, that "*missionaries are imprisoned,*" would awaken the attention of the whole Christian community—and every heart in which pulsated the feelings of brotherhood, nay, even of *humanity, common humanity,* would swell with anxious solicitude, and the question would be asked by thousands, at the same moment—"*where? where?*"

If the answer were, in pagan lands—among a people who yet inhabit the dark places of cruelty—in the distant islands of the sea, among barbarians—what would the Christian do?—fold his arms!—seat himself by his fireside, amidst the comforts of home, and leave those pioneers of the gospel to their fate? The bare question is revolting! No—but from North to South, and from East to West, one noble, generous effort, would be made, and differing sects would be found acting in harmonious concert, to find the ways and the means to liberate their captive brethren.

The case is not a fancied one—"*missionaries are imprisoned!*"—not in Pagan lands—not among a heathen people, not in the distant and barbarous islands of the sea—but in *the midst of Christendom;* among a people *professing* to be Christians, and a people *professing* to be free!

Yes—in the penitentiary of one of the States of this Republic, in Georgia—and in the capital of that state, Milledgeville, may be found *two* faithful, devoted followers of the meek and lowly Jesus—preachers of his everlasting gospel, *classed with felons,* wearing the ignominious badges of the loathsome penitentiary, and

doomed to the labor and toil of working day in and day out, and subsisting upon the coarse and unsavory fare of that dismal place!

And for what has this terrible punishment been inflicted? For crimes committed? No—for any violation of the law? No—or offences of any sort, either against the rightful government of the State, or of the United States? No—no Christians, no, ye *honest* men of all parties—no, ye freemen of America—but for being found preaching the gospel to, and teaching the Cherokee Indians! For this, and for this *only*, have these good men, and brothers in the bonds and fellowship of the Gospel, been dragged from their holy employment, and in violation of the laws and treaties of the land, and in the face of their written authority, given by the Executive of the United States, to go in among these people and enlighten and bless them, has this outrage upon their persons, their right, and their liberty, been committed.

And by whom has this been permitted? Who in the first place winked in *ignorant prejudice* at this daring outrage of Georgia, and then refused, afterwards, to interfere, and execute the laws that his *oath* binds him to execute, and by so doing liberate those holy men; and who, after the case had undergone judicial investigation, and the incorruptible Marshall had pronounced the judgment of the Supreme Court, *virtually* commanding them to be set free—who, we ask, is it, that in contempt of this, still *refuses* to execute the power vested in him by the laws, and enforced upon him by the Supreme Court, and which his *oath* demands him to obey—who is he that refuses to break these penitentiary fetters, and give back to light and liberty, and society, and usefulness, those missionaries? We answer,

ANDREW JACKSON.

Is this doubted by any one? We know the bosoms of the humane—the hearts of the patriots—and the gen-

erous and noble feelings of the Christian, may well harbor a doubt whether it be *possible* that even Andrew Jackson could thus defy obligations so binding, in a cause so imperative, and so sacred. But we wlll put those doubts to flight. To do this we introduce here an official letter from the Secretary of War, which the reader will see puts the extinguisher upon all hope, that while General Jackson remains President, these abused Christians will not be released from their bondage.

When Paul and Silas were, by unjust judges, thrust into the inner prison, and when at midnight they lifted up their voices in the solitude of their cells, an angel came and delivered them. Those were times when prejudice and ignorance, like scales hung upon the eyes of the people; and when the agency of Heaven was employed in a direct way to awaken, and enlighten the sleeping and stupid multitude of that day, and establish by the test of miracles, the authority and the truth of God.

But now *our* angel, to effect the liberation of the Pauls and the Silas's of the present day, is *enlightened public opinion, and virtue.* Direct means employed by the master of life, for the accomplishment of such great ends, are withdrawn, and he has placed the power in our hands by human agency to accomplish *the same ends.* It is left to our *inteligence and our virtue.*

Read this letter—and then judge what hope remains for the liberation of the devoted Worcester and his companion in prison, while General Jackson has the power to keep them bound—and let every christian heart ask itself *what is its duty*?

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,
November, 14, 1831.

Sir, I have received *and submitted to the President,* the memorial of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missons, transmitted in your letter of the

3d inst., and am instructed to inform you, that having, *on mature consideration satisfied himself* that the Legislatures of the respective states have power to extend their laws over all persons living within their boundaries, and that when thus extended the various acts of Congress providing a mode of proceeding in cases of Indian intercourse, inconsistent with these laws, become imperative, he has no authority to interfere, under the circumstances stated in the memorial.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant, LEWIS CASS.

William Reed, Esq., Chairman of the prudential Committee of the A. B. C. F. M. Boston."

A State, in President Jackson's view of the subject, may therefore *nullify* "acts of Congress"!!!—and *he* takes upon *himself*, to exercise the kingly prerogative to *decide* the question, though the Supreme Court has rendered judgment against his decision—which, however, he respects as little as he does the "*acts of Congress*," the reason is, he is "*independent of both*," was born to command," and *the people to obey!!!*

But we leave this branch of the discussion to the judgment of an enlightened public and proceed.

Yes, Fellow Citizens, it is he, who ought to be the President of the *people*, the guardian of our rights, the supporter of the constitution, the executor of the laws, but who has told us *he* is above law, or what is the same thing, that *he* is "independent of both Congress and the Supreme Court;" and that he shall execute the laws, and administer the constitution according to *his* interpretation of them; it is *this* usurper, who with more than kingly daring, looks on composedly and sees a state exercising *usurped* powers, to afflict and disgrace men for preaching the gospel to a remnant of the original owners of our country!

If a Pagan despot were to act thus, though ten thousand miles distant, and did oceans roll between us and

the victims of his malice, all the energies of our souls would be employed to break down his power, and thousands and hundreds of thousands of gold and silver would be looked upon as the dust in the balance, when compared to the great object of liberating our brethren from such unjust and cruel slavery. And he who would not aid in effecting the great object, no matter by what christian name called, would justly subject himself to the indignation of insulted humanity.

But our despot is at hand. He breathes with us the air which our Fathers taught us to believe was the air of liberty—and so it was *until the breath of Andrew Jackson contaminated it.* He is moreover within our reach, and at our disposal, and the liberation of the missionaries is *within our power.* Nor are we called upon to fit our armaments to cross seas, nor to batter down the castle of the despot with powder and ball, nor expend hundreds and thousands to accomplish so great an object; we have it in our power in a few weeks from this day, by going to the ballot box and voting against the re-election of *Andrew Jackson,* to demolish the castle of despotism which has been upwards of three years in building, drive the tyrant from it into his original obscurity, re-establish the empire of law, and *let the missionaries go free.*

We ask, where, where is the christian, where the citizen, where the man, who will refuse to come forward, and lend his power, the exercise of which will not cost him a *single cent,* to rid the country of the Usurper who has shown himself to be a despot; his conscience to be impervious to the obligations of his oath, and his heart steeled against the cries of suffering humanity?

Where, we ask, is the man? Let him who would refuse to unite in a cause so holy, hold up his hand—let him stand but before angels and men, and announce his insensibility to *such* a call, that he may not be mistaken before any righteous community in the future. But no,

we will not believe that there lives one man, having the feelings of a man, to say nothing of Christians, who would, *under such circumstances*, feel indifferent to the fate of the heralds of the gospel, or withhold his efforts to release them from a bondage so lawless, so cruel, and so unjust.

When Rome was free, the declaration of one of her sons—no matter how humble his condition, '*I am a Roman citizen*,' made the despot relax his hold, in the certain prospect if he did not, that *all Rome* would rise to defend the victim and avenge the insulted honor of the Republic.

But, here, in America, how have our hearts felt and our energies been employed during the *many months* that the voices of two of our citizens have been mournfully uttering the complaint, '*we, who are American citizens, are here incarcerated in this loathsome prison—our crime being the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the aboriginese of the country.*'

Will we stand still any longer? Will we permit the opportunity to pass which is now to be brought to our *very doors*, to liberate our brothers? Will any man consider the toil for the accomplishment of so great an object too great, which requires *only* that each person shall *vote against the re-election of Andrew Jackson?*

Our Fathers pledged themselves, each to the other, in their property, and their sacred honor, aye, and *in their lives*, to win the boon of freedom—to lay the foundation of equal and just laws in this Western world—to secure to *every man* his rights, and confer upon *all* the blessings of free government. Nobly did they resolve, and nobly did they achieve. Treasure and blood, and life, were *freely* given, and the eye of the dying patriot, catching a glimpse of the glorious future, would impart to his heart as it ceased to beat, a tranquil joy that compensated for the agonies of the death wound, and the loss of life!

But had that part of the future been revealed, when the place of Washington, and Adams, and Jefferson, and Madison, and Monroe, and the second Adams, should be filled by one who in utter disregard of the laws, would *erect the throne of the despot*, and *decree* that freemen, and the sons of freemen, and the ministers of the gospel of Christ should be thrust into a penitentiary for no earthly crime, to mingle with felons, the joy of the dying patriot would have been turned to sorrow—and '*how vain is it*,' he would have said with his expiring breath, '*for me thus to shed my blood, and yield up my life for my country and for freedom.*'

Happy, thrice happy for man, is it that a curtain separates his view from the events of the future.

But we live when that which might then have been announced by some prophet, has become a *sad reality.* Will we permit its continuance? What say ye? you who revere the memory of your patriot fathers—what say ye? you who love liberty and law—what say ye? you who are the followers of Jesus, will ye let slip the opportunity, the only opportunity which is *at hand*, to thrust from his seat the author of all the wrongs that are heaped upon the memories of our fathers—and of the disgrace which has been inflicted on our liberty and our law—and of the *violence* which has been so ruthlessly exerted upon our brothers?

"NO"—We hear the indignant and heart-swelling answer from thousands, "*no we will not.*"

Then let the response be heard in the midst of all who are free—in our churches, in the hamlets, and upon the mountain tops, let all come up with the glorious purpose, to thrust the despot from his throne, and save our country, our liberty, our altars and our hopes.

Let our watch-word be "*down with the despot and liberation to the incarcerated missionaries.*"